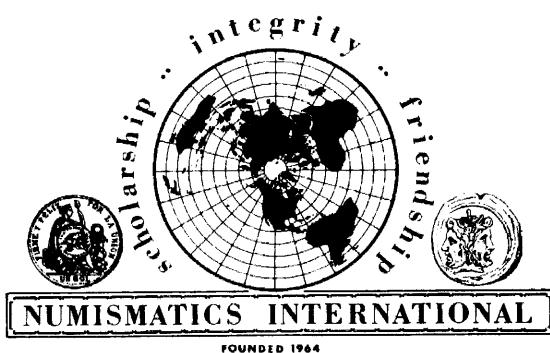


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## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

### **FEATURES**

Indian "Rupee Boxes": A Vanished Gift, by <i>David Spencer Smith</i> .....	297
Lourdes and Fatima Revisited, by <i>Bob Forrest</i> .....	301
The Plate Money of Sweden, by <i>Rick Ponterio</i> .....	308

### **DEPARTMENTS**

Book News & Reviews.....	313
Member Notice Page .....	316

### **INSIDE N.I.**

Donations Report.....	295
Librarian's Report.....	295
Membership Chairman's Report .....	295

### **OTHER ITEMS**

Coin Legends VI, by <i>David Block</i> .....	312
Even at the meeting you can find an interesting coin, by <i>Roger deWardt Lane</i> ..	296
St. Veronus of Lembeek .....	316
Something About the Monetary Situation in the Kingdom of Nejd c. 1850, by <i>Jürgen Mikeska</i> .....	300

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# INSIDE N.I.

## MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

There have been no new applications for membership received since last month's report.



## DONATIONS REPORT

We have received the following donation since the last report:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Donation</u>	<u>Preference of Use</u>
FRALEY, Marvin L.	86 coins of Europe (NVS)	NI Reference Collection

NVS = No Value Stated by Donor



## LIBRARIAN'S REPORT

I. The following material is new to the Library:

Marian Morris

JD70.TeiA.R964:HMRGP

TEIXEIRA DE ARAGAO, AUGUSTO C.

*Descripcao geral e historica das moedas cunhadas em nome dos reis,  
regentes e governadores de Portugal. (Portuguese text)*

1964-66 reprint of 1874-1880 work, 3 vols. 1581pp, 106 plates.

II. The Library was pleasantly surprised to receive from NI Life Member Marian Morris the above work by Teixeira de Aragao. This three volume set was marked by bibliographer Elvira E. Clain-Stefanelli as considered fundamental for anyone researching the history of Portuguese coins prior to 1874.

Granvyl G. Hulse, Jr., Book Librarian  
James D. Haley, Periodical Librarian

## EVEN AT THE MEETING YOU CAN FIND AN INTERESTING COIN

*Roger deWardt Lane, Hollywood, Florida, NI #815*

I walked in to the Fort Lauderdale Coin Club meeting a little early. Already set up was Gene Sternlicht with Richard Blatter looking at a small box of old coins. Gene said he had just acquired this group. I asked if there were any dimes in the box. No, but here is an old one, as I was handed an unidentified copper looking 25mm piece.

My taste is for those little silver dimes, but I also like an old unidentified piece too. Looking at the coin through a 16 power glass, I recognized the kufic inscriptions, as around 200 AH/AD 813, or almost 1200 years old.

After purchasing the coin from Gene, I showed it to Steve Schor and asked him to take it with him, scan it and send the picture to me via e-mail. The image was posted on the internet on the news groups and eventually on the Islamic Coin Group (I.C.G.) where it was added to their Photo Album as no. 40.

Within a few days, one of the members of the I.C.G., Lutz Ilisch, sent via 3-mail the identification.

*It is one of those not quite contemporary forgeries of a al-Kufa 135 A.H. dirhams produced in the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.H., as were found in a North-Western Iranian hoard of forged dirhams around 1970 and published by A. H. Morton in The Numismatic Chronicle 1975, p.156, no. 5.*

I have been a member of the American Numismatic Society for over 35 years and have all of their annual publications *Numismatic Chronicle* in my library. I found the reference and read a most interesting article **An Iranian Hoard of Forged Dirhems**. The hoard appeared on the Tehran market in 1971. Over a thousand coins found together in a pot. The author A. H. Morton examined nearly four hundred of them. He identified my coin as a forgery from the lot estimated to be dated about AH 260/AD 873-4. The coin is a base metal, copper, which was originally covered by thin silver plating. "Originally they must have been quite convincing", he states.

My coin is a forgery of the mint Al-Kufa, dated AH 135/AD 648. Noted as very common. The three references sited do not list the **three dots** shown on the reverse of my coin or as shown on No. 5 Plate 12 in the 1975 *Numismatic Chronicle*.



Another article examined coins from the Iranian Hoard for metallography and found the coins were counterfeit cast of impure copper and lightly silvered over, so as to be acceptable as dirhems.

# INDIAN “RUPEE BOXES”: A VANISHED GIFT

*David Spencer Smith, Miami, Florida, NI #LM-92*

Some years ago, I was visiting Karachi and noticed in a silversmith's window what appeared to be small stacks of Indian rupees. These proved to be beautifully made cylindrical boxes, each comprising a coin at top and bottom and varying numbers of hand-milled circlets in between, simulating a stack of coins. A representative group of these is shown in Fig. 1. A thin silver sheet backs the milled “coins” and provides the flange where the two portions of the stack may be pulled apart and reclosed (Figs. 2, 3). The Urdu name for these translates as “Boxes of rupees”.



Fig. 1. A group of “rupee boxes”: clockwise from top left are Numbers 9,10,11,5,1.

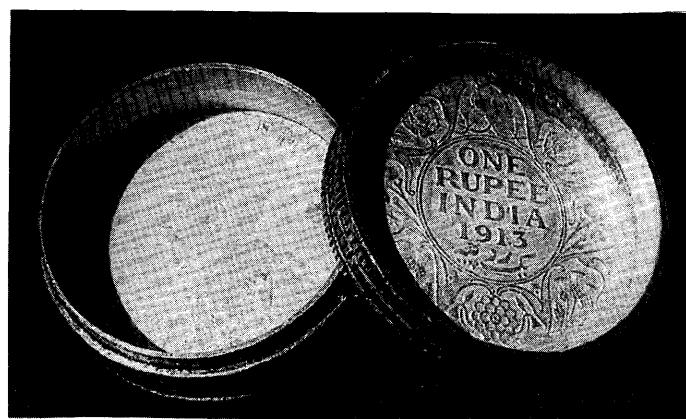


Fig. 2. An opened box (Number 6): note coins set in top and base.

In all the examples I saw, one end of the stack was capped with a real coin obverse and the other end with the corresponding reverse. These two coins were typically in EF condition when the box was made, and the interior of each box is coated with a bright silver wash-- absence of oxidation suggesting that this was a paint, not of metallic silver.



Fig. 3. Box Number 6: note milling of genuine coins at top and base, and relatively regular simulated milling along sides of box. Also, note the simulated coins in the stack, each separated from its neighbors by a narrow gap.

Between the genuine coins at top and base, the wall of the box cylinder comprises rings, each approximating to the width of a coin, and each separated from its neighbors by a narrow gap (Fig. 3). Each simulated coin in the stack is “milled”; at time this tooling is relatively regular and matches that of the genuine coins fairly closely, though usually rather more coarsely (Fig. 3). But “milling” is often less regular, as in the 5 riyal box (Fig. 4). However, at a glance, the stacks of coins are very convincing. I purchased most of the specimens I was shown, over several visits between 1992 and 1999, eleven boxes in all. Their cost is determined (as with all silver objects in Pakistan) by their fine silver weight (known or estimated) multiplied by a factor increasing with the quality and intricacy of the work on the object in question. The delicacy of the “milling” on the coin stacks ensures that these were not inexpensive items! I believe I was the only purchaser of these – on each visit I saw pieces I’d left the year before – and succumbed.

Virtually all the information I have about these objects was provided by Mr. Khan, the proprietor of the silver shop where they were found. He informed me that these were made between the end of the nineteenth century, just into Victoria’s reign, until the late 1930’s. They were used as gifts to suggest minor wealth, and were probably used as pill-boxes or the like.

They were apparently made to order: four in my sample are of exactly the same coin number-- sixteen, but others range from 7 to 14. The boxes based on Indian rupees are listed below; ruler, KM number, dates of obverse/reverse coins, and in parentheses, the number of coins in the stack, including the genuine coins at each end. The number of each coin box identified the examples mentioned in the figure captions.

1	Victoria	KM-457	1840/1840	(9)
2	Victoria	KM-492	1877/1878	(16)
3	Edward VII	KM-508	1905/1905	(16)
4	Edward VII	KM-508	1904/1906	(14)
5	George V	KM-524	1913/1917	(10)
6	George V	KM-524	1913/1919	(7)
7	George V	KM-524	1919/1918	(16)
8	George V	KM-524	1918/1918	(14)
9	George V	KM-524	1920/1918	(16)
10	Saudi Arabia 1-Riyal			(16)
11	Iran 5-Rials			(9)

The majority of examples I saw were based on Indian rupees, but two specimens employed Saudi Arabian and Iranian coins. The first of these (Fig. 1), a stack of 16, is similar to the 1-Riyal KM-18 of Saudi Arabia; however, the *Hejira* date AH 1350 is unlisted. The second example is based on the 5-Rials of Iran (Y-115), dated AH 1312 and comprising 9 coins in the stack (Fig. 1). The latter example is unusual in showing "milling" much more closely spaced than in the original coins (Fig. 4).

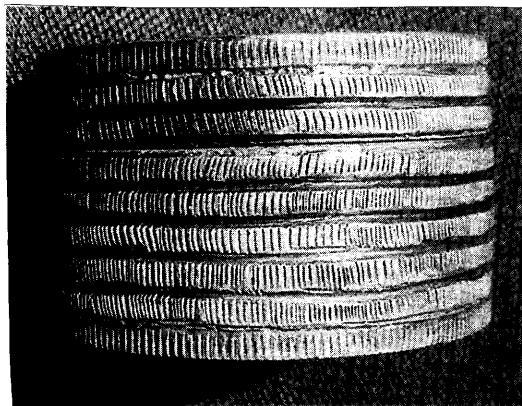


Fig. 4. Box Number 11: note the milling of genuine coins at top and base and the irregular and the crude, close-packed simulated milling.

The gross weight of the Indian rupee of this period was 11.66gm. Thus the weight of the two actual coins in a box is 23.32gm. The George V 1919/1918 box weighs 46.21gm; silver of the simulated coins (including the very thin internal wash) is thus 22.89gm or just under two rupees, with the reasonable assumption that the silver of the cylinder is the same fineness as the coins. This corresponds to 49.5% of the weight of the two end-coins. The corresponding estimate for the Saudi 1-Riyal stack of 16, weighing 46.63gm with the gross weight of each coin at 11.60gm, gives the weight of the box wall as 23.43gm or just over two rupees, or 50.5% of the weight of the two end-coins. Interestingly, the taller coin boxes were more expensive to make than shorter ones: compared with the near 50% contribution of the box walls in the 16-coin stacks mentioned above, the corresponding figures for a 9-coin stack of Victoria and a 7-coin stack of George V are respectively 46% and 35%. In production terms, the "cheapest" box in our sample is the 9-coin stack of the large 5-Rial coins of Iran: here, the total weight of the box is 67.49gm, the two end-coins weigh 50gm and the box wall 17.49gm, or only 26% of the total. These calculations were presumably built into the offering price of these boxes in the Indian bazaars:

unfortunately, we have no information on the cost of these presents when they were first made and sold.

Evidently, during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century these coin boxes were popular gifts. They do not seem to have survived World War II or the separation of India and Pakistan in 1947. I searched for examples, without success, elsewhere in Karachi and in Rawalpindi, and their scarcity may suggest that many were melted for the total silver content. In any event, surviving specimens serve to document an almost forgotten pre-partition Indian social practice.

I feel certain that a reader will be able to add additional information on these "rupee boxes". I would be most grateful for such input.

\*\*\*\*\*

## **SOMETHING ABOUT THE MONETARY SITUATION IN THE KINGDOM OF NEJD C. 1850**

*Jürgen Mikeska*

(Reprinted from *NI Bulletin*, March 1978)

The Kingdom of Nejd has no real monetary system. All of its money in circulation came from abroad, with the Nejd counterstamp applied.

In the northern provinces of Gauf and Schomer, money from Turkey and Europe circulated, while in Hasa, the largest province along the Persian Sea, money from Persia and Indian Rupees were in use.

In the Nejd itself, the people accepted only Reales from Spain and English Sovereigns.

As small change, they used a piece called Gedîdah (= new coin). The actual pieces were old Egyptian para coins. Another coin in use was one called Khordah. These were copper coins struck in Basrah about the year 1700.

Thirty Khordah were equal to one Gedîdah. The value of one Gedîdah was 4 to 4½ English pence and the Khordah was about ⅓ to ¼ English farthing.

The only coin struck in the Kingdom was a long piece known as a fish-hook larin and it was for use only in Hasa. This larin was known as Towîlah and its value was about three English farthings.

Money was not of much importance to the people in the Kingdom as they lived in a barter-system. Coins were needed mainly only for foreign trade. For this reason, many more pieces and types were found in the outer provinces in circulation than in the inner provinces.

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Bibliography: William Grifford Palgrave, *Reise in Arabien*, Leipzig, 1867.

# LOURDES AND FATIMA REVISITED

*Bob Forrest, Manchester, England, NI #2382*

In "Of Marian Apparitions" (1) I said that medals issued "by or in the name of" Lourdes are amongst the commonest of religious medals. That phrase "or in the name of" is quite important, for the image of the young Bernadette Soubirous kneeling before the Virgin Mary at the entrance of the grotto became quite literally an iconic image that found its way onto Marian devotional medals struck far away from Lourdes itself. Indeed, a couple of the medals pictured in that article (as figs. 8 & 9) may not have been struck at/for Lourdes at all, but somewhere in Belgium, the country where both turned up!



Fig. 1

A good example of the iconic use of the Lourdes grotto is afforded by the obverse of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century Portuguese medal shown 1½ times actual size in fig.1. The exergual legend NA SA DE LURDES (Our Lady of Lourdes) is almost superfluous, so instantly recognisable is the image. The reverse of the medal is St. Anthony of Padua, with legend SANTO ANTONIO ROGAI POR NOS (= St. Anthony, pray for us.)

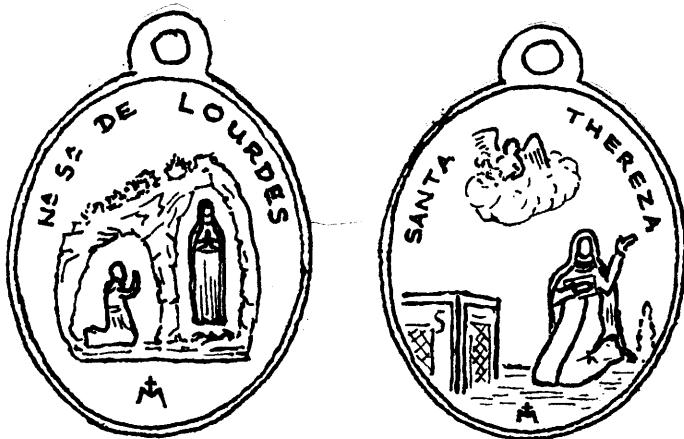


Fig. 2

Another medal, this time in white metal, which treats the Lourdes grotto as a Marian image that can be devotionally paired with that of a "favourite saint" is pictured 1½ times actual size in fig.2. Its obverse is much as fig.1, but with a regular spelling of Lourdes and

with an M surmounted by a Cross in the exergue (this is characteristic of the reverse of the Miraculous Medal, of course, and signifies the unity of Christ and Mary (2).) The reverse of fig.2 shows St. Teresa of Avila kneeling before an altar above which hovers a cloud-borne angel (3). Again we have an M surmounted by a Cross in the exergue. The accompanying legend is SANTA THEREZA, which spelling of Teresa, taken with the obverse legend, suggests that the medal is Brazilian or older Portuguese (in Portugal today, I understand, the name is spelt Teresa, as in Spain.)

Another interesting Portuguese Lourdes medal, in bronze and of 19<sup>th</sup> century date, is shown 1½ times actual size in fig.3. The obverse shows the image of the Virgin with the legend N. S. DE LOURDES R.P.N. = Our Lady of Lourdes, pray for us. The reverse is a standard image of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary (4), with the Dove of the Holy Spirit above, and with accompanying legend CORACOES DE JESUS E DE MARIA (= Hearts of Jesus and Mary.) The ROMA at the base of the reverse indicates a manufacture in Rome (5). It is curious that a medal for use in Portugal should relate to a shrine in France and be made in Italy!

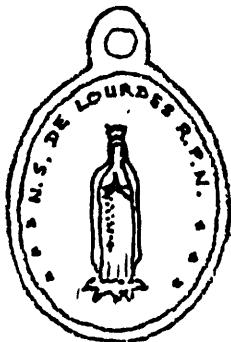


Fig. 3

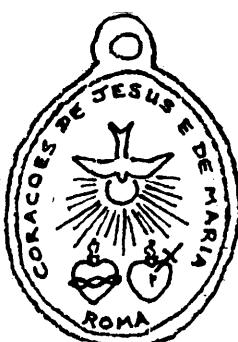
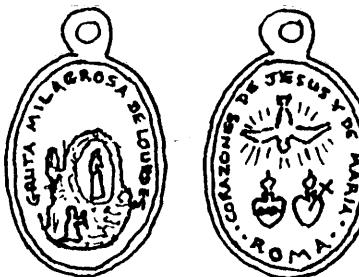


Fig. 4



The small bronze medal shown 1½ times actual size in fig.4 is a Spanish relative of the foregoing piece. Its obverse depicts the grotto scene of figs. 1 & 2, with the legend GRUTA MILAGROSA DE LOURDES (= Miraculous Grotto of Lourdes.) The reverse is as fig.3 – even including the ROMA – but with the legend in Spanish – CORAZONES DE JESUS Y DE MARIA (= Hearts of Jesus and Mary.)

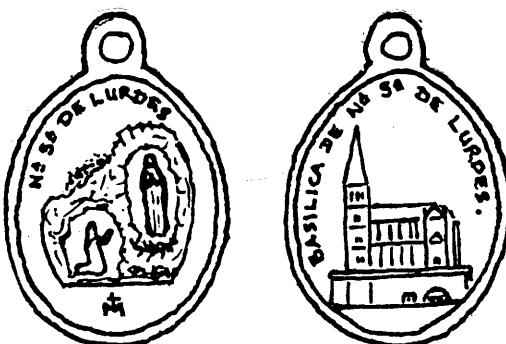
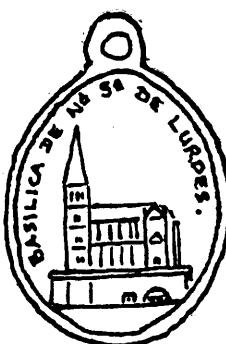


Fig. 5



The bronze Spanish Lourdes medal shown 1½ times actual size in fig.5 is interesting in that it is a direct copy of a regular Grotto/Basilica type of medal issued by the shrine and

seen in "Of Marian Apparitions" (see fig.4 of that article), but with its legends in Spanish. This close copying makes me wonder if this is more than an iconic type, like figs. 1, 2 & 4, and if it is in fact a souvenir medal made for Spanish pilgrims to Lourdes. Note again the M surmounted by a Cross in the obverse exergue.

But it is not just Lourdes that supplies an iconic image for use on devotional medals, for Fatima does too. The English white metal medal shown 1½ times actual size in fig.6 is a good example, its obverse showing the apparition of the Virgin atop the little holm-oak tree, with the legend LADY OF FATIMA, and its reverse the English St. Thomas More (6). Insofar as this medal pairs an iconic apparitional obverse with a saintly reverse, it

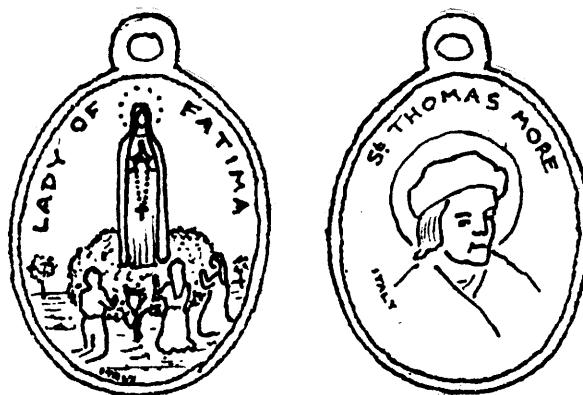


Fig. 6

neatly parallels the similar Portuguese usage of Lourdes in figs. 1 & 2. Note, too, the ITALY stamped at the base of the obverse and on St. Thomas More's shoulder on the reverse: we have here a medal relating to a Portuguese shrine, made in Italy for use in England, in which respect it is like the ROMA medals shown in figs. 3 & 4 – very cosmopolitan! The medal shown in fig.6 is one of a broad series of devotional medals made in Italy for sale through Catholic outlets in England (7). The series, needless to say, includes an English Lourdes medal.

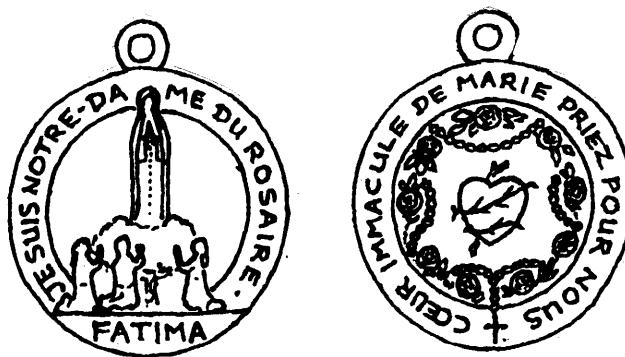


Fig. 7

An interesting French Fatima medal (as if the French didn't have enough Marian devotion with their multitudinous Lourdes medals!) is shown 1½ times actual size in fig.7. Made of

aluminium, and thus modern, its obverse is much as fig.6, but with legend JE SUIS NOTRE DAME DU ROSAIRE / FATIMA (= I am Our Lady of the Rosary, Fatima.) Readers should recall that during the Fatima visions, the Virgin had a Rosary hung over her right arm, exactly as she had done at Lourdes (8). This rosary is better seen on the obverse of fig.6 than that of fig.7, but it plays a prominent role on the reverse of fig.7, where it is interwoven with a wreath of nine roses. Etymologically the word "rosary" is connected with a garland of roses (9), and of course the rose is a regular symbol of Marian perfection that peeps out at us quite persistently through the sequence of Marian apparitions from La Salette through to Banneux (10). At the centre of the reverse of fig.7 is an unusual representation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, not for once transfigured by a sword (as on the reverses of figs.3 & 4), but wreathed in thorns indicative of pain. The reverse legend reads COEUR IMMACULE DE MARIE PRIEZ POUR NOUS (= Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us.)

But getting back to Lourdes, another iconic use of the grotto image features on the reverse of the white metal medal shown 1½ times actual size in fig.8. This is a Belgian use of the image, for the obverse relates to the Christ of Tancremont (11), a 12<sup>th</sup> century wooden crucifix some four feet high which is housed in a chapel near the now ruined Chateau of Tancremont, 9 miles south-east of Liège. The crucifix is of an old type on which Christ is depicted wearing a long robe rather than the more familiar loin cloth, the most famous example of the type being the Volto Santo at Lucca in Italy (12). The miracle-working nature of the crucifix led to Tancremont becoming a place of pilgrimage, and it appears likely that this medal is a souvenir of a pilgrimage there. Tancremont is, coincidentally, only a couple of miles from Banneux, the scene of Mariette Beco's Marian visions in 1933. Indeed, young Mariette is reputed to have found a treasured rosary when on her way to Tancremont – make of that what you will (and some folk do deem it worthy of mention! (13))

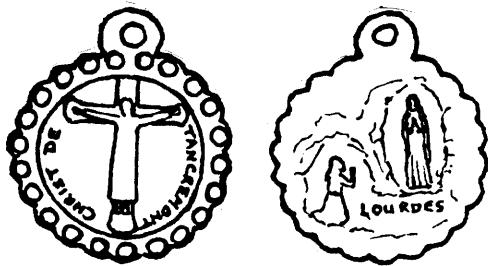


Fig. 8

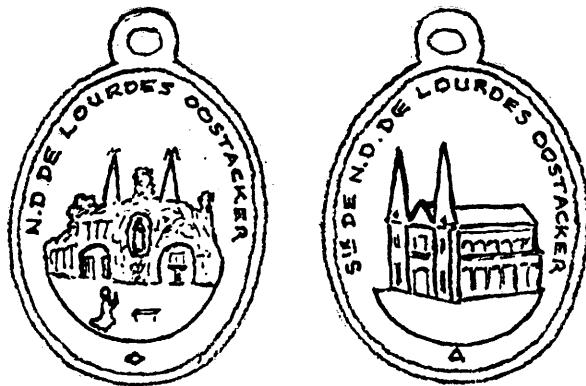


Fig. 9

Staying in Belgium, our next Lourdes medal is an altogether more curious one than anything described so far in this article. Of early 20<sup>th</sup> century date and made of aluminium, it is shown 1½ times actual size in fig.9. Its obverse shows, not St Bernadette kneeling before the Virgin in the grotto, but a pilgrim kneeling before a statue of the Virgin standing in a copy of the Lourdes grotto at Oostakker (now Oostacker), some 4

miles north of Ghent. The obverse legend reads N.D. DE LOURDES OOSTACKER (= Our Lady of Lourdes, Oostacker.) The reverse of the medal shows the church of Oostacker (of which more presently) with the legend SIR. DE N.D. DE LOURDES OOSTACKER (= Souvenir of Our Lady of Lourdes, Oostacker.)

The story behind all this is, as might be expected, a curious one (14). In 1871 a local Marquise decided to build an aquarium on her estate at Oostacker. It was to be built inside an artificial cave or (here comes the key word) grotto which had at one time served as a "hermitage" for a former Trappist brother of hers. Whether this vague religious connection prompted what follows is not clear, but whatever, shortly after the aquarium was installed in the grotto, the parish priest paid it a visit and suggested that it would add a nice touch if a statue of Our Lady of Lourdes was put amid the rockery. This was duly done, and the members of the family took to reciting a Hail Mary every time they passed it. In 1873 the statue was formally blessed, and being now "official", as it were, the local populace asked the Marquise if they might be allowed to come and offer it their devotions from time to time. Access was duly granted to them on Sunday afternoons, and visits there became increasingly popular. Soon the place was more a shrine than an aquarium, and miracle cures began to be reported – indeed, on the medal ex voto crutches can be seen hanging on the rock face to the left of the grotto! (Lourdes was, of course, very much a talking point at this time, though at what stage the statue of the Virgin and the grotto aquarium turned into a "copy" of Lourdes is not clear.) Soon the number of pilgrims to Oostacker had increased to such an extent that Sunday afternoon access was just not enough, and the shrine was thrown open to the public on a daily basis. By 1875 such was its popularity that it was deemed necessary to build a Gothic church there – this being the church on the reverse of fig.9, of course. According to *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, by the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century some 60,000 pilgrims came annually to the shrine, from Belgium, Holland and Northern France, these being in some 450 organised pilgrimages – an extraordinary achievement for a former aquarium with a Virgin on the rocks!

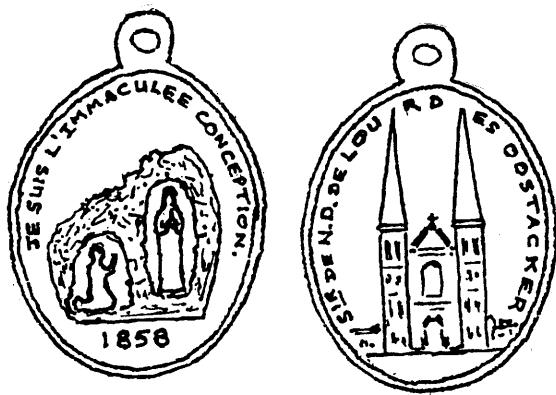


Fig. 10

Another Oostacker medal – again an early 20<sup>th</sup> century production in aluminium – is shown 1½ times actual size in fig.10. Its obverse shows the famous Lourdes grotto scene, with the legend JE SUIS L'IMMACULEE CONCEPTION (= "I am the Immaculate Conception" – the famous words spoken by the Virgin in the 16<sup>th</sup> vision (15)) and, in the

exergue, 1858, the year of the visions. The reverse shows the church at Oostacker again, from a different angle to the reverse of fig.9, but with the same legend.

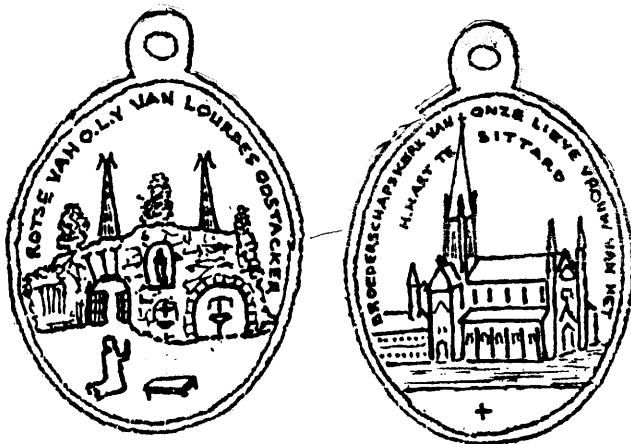


Fig. 11

A rather more puzzling Oostacker medal – a late 19<sup>th</sup> century production in bronze – is shown 1½ times actual size in fig.11. Its obverse is very similar to the obverse of fig.9, but with the Flemish legend ROTSE VAN O.L.V. VAN LOURDES OOSTACKER (= The cliff of Our Good Lady of Lourdes, Oostacker.) The reverse of this medal does not relate to Oostacker, however, though it is relevant to the interlinked themes of pilgrimage and Marian devotion which both apply very much to that shrine. The reverse, as the accompanying legend tells us, is the BROEDERSCHAPSKERK VAN ONZE LIEVE VROUW VAN HET H. HERT TE SITTARD or the Church of the Brotherhood of Our Good Lady of the Sacred Heart at Sittard (16), situated in the Netherlands some 12 miles north-east of Maastricht. The Sacred Heart referred to here is that of Jesus and not that of Mary herself, for the church (built in 1875) is one of a number of pilgrim churches built in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century in honour of Mary and her “ineffable love” for the Sacred Heart of Jesus – a neat way to combine two very popular forms of devotion.

The churches arose out of the personal mission of one Father Jules Chevalier who, in 1854, decided to found a society of men whose aim was to cure the religious apathy and associated social evils of the time through the healing power of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. To that end he invoked the special help of the Virgin Mary, and the epithet “Our Lady of the Sacred Heart” was born. By 1891 the society had no less than 18 million members world-wide.

As regards the medal in fig.11, its use of two places of pilgrimage – one in Belgium and one some 90 miles to the east of it, in the Netherlands – is rather puzzling. Whether the medal was struck at Sittard and used Oostacker as an “iconic image”, or whether it was a medal struck for pilgrims who visited both sites as part of some regular pilgrim route of Marian devotion, I do not know. All I can say is that for whatever reason these two quite different shrines feature on the one medal.

#### Notes.

1. See *NI Bulletin*, December 2002, p.369-379.
2. See “Religious Medals I: Visions” in *NI Bulletin*, June 1997, p.156-7.

3. St. Teresa is supposed to have had “a rapture” in which Christ said to her, “I desire you no longer to converse with men, but with Angels.” (See, for example, Bob & Penny Lord, *Heavenly Army of Angels* (1991), p.229-231.) On St. Teresa’s most famous encounter with an angel, with a nice medallic illustration of it, see “Indeed a Noble Company” in *NI Bulletin*, March 2003, p.96-97 (figs 3 & 4).
4. See a) the article cited in note 2, p.154-6, & b) “On Sacred Hearts” in *NI Bulletin*, July 2001, p.193-203.
5. See a) “To be a Pilgrim I” in *NI Bulletin*, March 2000, p.66-76, & b) “More on ROMA Medals” in *NI Bulletin*, July 2002, p.197-204.
6. Famous for resigning his position as Lord Chancellor when he was unable to support Henry VIII on the question of his divorce from Catherine of Aragon. He was beheaded in 1535 for refusing to take the Oath of Supremacy acknowledging Henry as supreme head of the Church of England. He was canonized in 1935.
7. See the article cited in note 2, p.160 (note 15.)
8. See the article cited in note 1 (p.371) for details.
9. Connected with the Latin “rosarium” meaning a rose garden, whence it came to mean a wreath or garland of roses, the resemblance of which to a string of beads (particularly beads connected with the recitation of prayers to Mary, for whom the rose is a special symbol) is obvious. There is an obscure legend which says that the Virgin Mary was once seen to pluck rosebuds from the lips of a devout young monk when he was reciting Hail Marys, and to weave them into a garland which she placed upon her head. (See the article “Rosary” in C.G.Herbermann et al, *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (1907-1914), vol.13, p.187.)
10. See the article cited in note 1, p.369-379.
11. For information on the Christ of Tancremont I am indebted to Christel Parotte of La Maison du Tourisme du Pays de Vesdre.
12. See, for example, the article “Cross and Crucifix” in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (as note 9), vol.4, p.529.
13. See, for example, J.J.Delaney, *A Woman clothed with the Sun* (1961; repr. 2001), p.208; C.M.Odell, *Those who saw Her* (1986), p.152.
14. See the article “Oostacker” in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (as note 9), vol.11, p.259; also Joan Carroll Cruz, *Miraculous Images of Our Lady* (1993), p.48-50.
15. See the article cited in note 1, p.372.
16. My information on Sittard is taken from two internet sources:
  - a) [http://digiboek.50megs.com/nlsinten/sint\\_s.htm](http://digiboek.50megs.com/nlsinten/sint_s.htm)
  - b) <http://www.misacor.org/en/jules.htm>

The first of these is the entry “Sittard” in the Dutch on-line encyclopedia *Encyclopedie van Hollandse Heiligen*, and the second the article on Father Jules Chevalier in the web-site of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart.

# THE PLATE MONEY OF SWEDEN

*Rick Ponterio*

Between 1644 and 1776 the government of Sweden issued one of the most interesting and unusual forms of currency – plates of copper stamped with marks of value to circulate as money. On viewing examples of the different denominations which were in use, ranging from  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 10 daler, it is hard to view these as a “money of convenience”, at least in our frame of reference.

The Swedish Falu mine has been producing copper since the Middle Ages. In fact, the mining company there, “Stora Kopparbergs Bergslag”, is considered to be the oldest commercial firm still in existence. During the 16<sup>th</sup> century, copper production in Sweden represented only a small fraction of that produced in all of Europe, but an increase in the demand for copper by Spain for a subsidiary coinage and a reduction in continental copper production increased the importance of Swedish copper in international trade. During the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century it has been estimated that Swedish copper accounted for two-thirds of the needs of Europe even though that production amounted to only 3,000 tons or so in 1650.

The primary coinage of Sweden during this period was of silver and this had to be imported as there was little, if any, domestic production. Copper, therefore, played a prominent role in maintaining the silver coinage of Sweden as it was exported to other European trading centers, primarily Amsterdam, where it would be sold and silver purchased. A minor coinage in copper did circulate in Sweden and here we encounter an unusual thing; different value structures for coins of like denomination but of different metallic composition.

The Riksdaler of Sweden was similar to that of the other northern European countries bearing the likeness of the sovereign, coats of arms, etc., and being of an international standard of fineness and weight which remained fairly stable. Daler Silvermynt (Daler SM) was a unit of reckoning or account relating to a value based on silver; it need not have been actual coin. In the same light Daler Kopparmynt (Daler KM) reflected a unit of accounting based on copper, coined or not. The differences in these units are found in the successive devaluations of the copper coinage in reference to silver coins of the same face values. Daler KM was also an accounting unit used by the general public. The plate money of Sweden was always struck and valued in Daler SM denominations.

Swedish officials were well aware of the impact their copper had on European markets and how, if production was even slightly reduced, increased demand and prices would follow quickly. They also realized that storage of copper which could not be immediately sold (if the prices wasn't “right” at the moment) would also reduce supplies of available copper and tend to maintain a higher price. Another means of reducing the amount of copper available to European markets was to increase the use of copper in domestic coinage; this could quickly be reversed and coins exported when market conditions made it feasible. As will be seen, this occurred time and again with the plate money.

The first Swedish copper coinage of 1624 consisted of ½, 1 and 2 ore denominations; these denominations were chosen to correspond with the same face values of silver coins, the value of the copper equal to the value to the silver in comparable pieces. Although linked by denomination, the values fluctuated according to the open market prices of the metals: where silver maintained a fairly constant level, the value of copper changed frequently, often drastically. A great decline in the value of copper in 1624 – when the price went from 131-1/2 Daler per skeppund (136 kilograms) to 150 Daler within a short time, then dropping to 90 Daler KM or 60 Riksdaler – caused great depreciation of copper money in the country. It became reasonable for people to exchange riksdalers for the low-priced coppers and sell them abroad at a profit.

Between 1625 and 1638 the exchange values between silver and copper fluctuated greatly, finally settling with copper holding a value about 20% less than silver: this relationship was finalized by law in 1643. However, it was understood that increases in the price of copper would occur and upset this balance, and the government acknowledged that copper coinage might be used as a commodity. This view brought copper coins into a new light and role in the coming year.

The Swedish government realized the great prospect of exporting copper coins as commodities, but closely examined how minting costs would reduce their profit margins. For example, the 1 ore coins, of which there were 32 per Daler (although this ratio varied from time to time), was acknowledged to have a much higher unit minting cost per Daler than in minting a single Daler coin. In 1643 the Privy Council recommended minting copper in the form of small plates in 1, 2, 3, and 4 Riksdaler denominations. The minting of these pieces would significantly reduce moneying costs and offer a convenient manner to transport coined copper.

Plate copper – plates of unrefined copper a few centimeters thick and a rectangular shape – had been produced at the Falu mint for years; this was a very practical form for handling and transporting copper. In fact, the first plate money issued – the 10 Daler SM of 1644 – weighed 19.72 kilograms. To indicate the value of this plate, and to show that it was indeed a coin, they were stamped in each of the corners with a circular seal bearing the initials of Queen Christiana, the date, and the crown; the value was denoted in a circular stamp in the center of the plate. This particular means of stamping plate money continued through all the subsequent issues.

The very fact that copper was worth so much less than silver (80-90 times for the same weight) made the range in the copper coinage huge, from the 1 ore to the 10 Daler piece 400 times heavier and larger! This vast difference makes it hard to believe that many considered the 10 Daler plate to be a true, circulating legal tender item. Indeed, most of these giants were exported within a few years of issue. A total of 26,774 of the 10 Daler plates were struck in 1644-45; 21,317 were known to have been shipped abroad by the end of 1646. Today fewer than 10 examples are known to exist.

Although the 10 Daler plate was a convenient way to transport copper and cost 30% less to mint than a comparable value of lower denomination round coins, it was probably considered to be a bit *too* large for convenience in trade; to point this up, the

largest denomination in subsequent issues of plates was 8 Daler. This new denomination plate could be more readily handled and transported, or stored as an asset while lower denomination plates (1, 2, and 4 Daler) were aimed at general circulation and usage as money.

During the next 15 years further issues of plate money came out at the rate of 56, 60 and 64 Riksdaler per skeppund. This consequently was reflected in a reduction in the weight of a 1 Daler plate from 1.81 kilograms in 1649 to 1.62 in March of 1660, and finally to 1.51 kilograms in November of that same year. Once again, a common situation occurred; older, heavier money was driven from circulation being replaced by new money of lighter weight and lower value. Whereas Sweden maintained silver as its primary coinage, a lack of silver in 1660 caused a large issuance of copper coinage, fixed at a rate of 1 to 3 between silver and copper coins. In other words, 4 Daler SM corresponded to 12 Daler KM. This rate remained in effect until 1673 when warfare between England and Holland disrupted Swedish trade with Amsterdam. This war, and the Swedish war with Brandenburg (1674-75) and Denmark (1676), caused further difficulties for the Swedes by cutting off foreign trade; the large quantities of copper coinage on hand in Sweden caused the exchange rate with silver to fluctuate again.

Between 1675 and 1679 large numbers of plates were stored or deposited in the Riksens Standed Bank which then supported the Treasury with loans. As had occurred before, when the overseas price of copper became attractive, the government banned private exportation of the metal; this was done to maintain the high price and to allow the Bank to be the sole official supplier, and for the government to indirectly benefit from the profits of the Bank. Plate money continued to be issued in large quantities until 1690 when a Royal Decree stated that as long as copper was worth more abroad than at home in the form of coinage, State-owned copper would be exported and minting would not be considered unless the foreign prices fell. Private parties, however, could do whatever they wished with their own copper. This wholesale exportation of copper enabled Sweden to obtain the quantities of silver which appeared in large issues of silver coinage. In 1698 copper plates were no longer considered to be coinage per se, but as a form of commodity subject to various export restrictions.

Coinage in copper did not resume until 1709 at which time Danish attacks on Sweden disrupted the export trade in copper (again). At that time the value of copper was 120 Daler SM per skeppund; plates were issued in large quantities until 1714 when a considerable rise in the price of copper made their minting less profitable. As usual, an export ban came into effect to reduce private exportation of the metal.

In 1715 King Charles was forced to raise large sums of money to repay loans taken to support the various wars of the preceding years. To do this the metal content of plate money was drastically altered from 120 to 180 Daler per skeppund. Old plates were to be countermarked to indicate revaluation, and new plates had a rhombic instead of a circular center stamp. This revaluation made it economically impossible to export plates, and between 1715 and 1716 about 3 million Daler SM was issued in plate form. At the same time a series of token coinage came out – money of necessity – to generate liquid capital for the government on a supposedly short-term basis. This

proved to be very successful for the government as the tokens circulated at the same par value as coins of a higher metal content value. The government later gained again when the token coinage was redeemed at quite a bit less than the originally promised exchange redemption value.

Until 1717 very little plate money had been redeemed for the token money of necessity. To encourage such exchanges a Royal decree was issued which ordered the devaluation of plate money by one third, effective March 1, 1718. People seeking redemption at full value after that date would be offered only tokens, bonds, or paper money in exchange. Redeemed plates received an additional stamp (the Lion of Gota on a shield and the date, 1718); unstamped plates were devalued as specified. Another decree banned the exportation of unstamped plates, and yet another issued a few days later ordered the confiscation of all plates not bearing the new counterstamp. Again, within days another decree ordered that an additional round stamp bearing three crowns was to be placed on the reverse of those plates with the Lion of Gota mark. Further decrees and acts stated that those plates bearing both new stamps would be valid; no other plates would be worth the value stamped on them if issued prior to 1717. Research Bertel Tingstrom has determined in this research of extant plate money that only about 25% of the plates owned by the general public in 1718 had been submitted for the State-mandated restamping.

Minting of plate money resumed in 1720 with 2 and 4 Daler denominations, the 4 Daler weighing 3 kilograms; large numbers of these were quickly exported. For the next 25 years, the price of copper remained fairly stable, as did the issuing of plates. However, changes in the laws regulating banking activities and the use of banknotes increased the overall use of paper money while the use of plate money declined. The increased banknote circulation soon caused a shortage of plates, and as usual export bans were in effect from 1742 to 1744. To ease the shortage of smaller plates, lower denomination banknotes were introduced to help in making change for what had earlier been the only banknote denomination, 50 Daler KM. The falling value of banknotes caused by huge issues, and the shortage of plates caused by higher copper prices overseas, forced the government to restrict the minting of plates; between 1745 and 1750, and again from 1757 to 1767, plates were issued in very small quantities. The following indicates the official view of the non-importance of plates at the time: in 1761 the mint at Avesta was destroyed by fire. That portion of the mint which produced round coins was immediately rebuilt; that part which produced plates was not reopened until 1767! Although few plates were being produced, large numbers were being bought by the Bank, evidently intending to export them at some convenient time in the future.

The coinage act of 1776 instituted a new system of coin reckoning wherein plates were considered to be only commodities. In fact, when the Riksdaler became the official money unit of currency in 1771, plates were banned as money. In the following decade many of the plates remaining in Sweden were shipped overseas due to the continued rise of copper prices through the 1780's.

After a break of 10 years, the coinage of plate money was resumed in 1786 although the plates were no longer included in the mint accounts as coins. The denominations or other markings of these issues are unknown to us today as the plates were

primarily for the commercial or export trade; it is probable that they were of the shape and weight of the old 4 Daler plates. There are several accounts which indicate that plates were being struck as late as 1809, mainly for export, and in the same form as before. It is not known if all plates struck after 1776 carried the 1768 date as so few have survived to the present time. It is known that large numbers of plates were shipped to the Far East with the Danish Asiatic Company's shipping lists denoting major shipments of "Swedish minted copper money" during the period 1776-1803.

And so the plate money of Sweden passed from being a convenient manner of handling copper coinage for large transactions, and frequently as a handy means of conveying a commodity, in history. Based on mint records it is estimated that nearly 48 million plates were issued between 1644 and 1776; as of 1986, fewer than 11,000 examples were known to still exist. These examples of a financial experiment which endured over 130 years before being finally abandoned represent a fascinating episode in numismatic and financial history.

Information for this article was obtained primarily from *Plate Money – The World's Largest Currency* by Bertel Tingstrom. This excellent survey and study examines all aspects of the plate money of Sweden; it has a wealth of information on mining and minting techniques, detailed information on government policies, as well as many charts, tables, graphs, and appendices which add greatly to the value of the book which is also lavishly illustrated. Anyone remotely interested in the plate money of Sweden should be an owner of this book.

(Published by Scott Semans – Info Sheet 235)

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## COIN LEGENDS VI

*David Block*

(Reprinted from *NI Bulletin*, April 1977)

A Cohen number does not identify a Roman coin.

The discovery of photography simplified enormously the problem of describing coins but did nothing to help locate a given coin in a catalog or determine it is not cataloged. The superstition thrives that a Roman imperial coin can be identified by giving its Cohen number. When H. Cohen made his extensive census of Roman coins he adopted the idea that inscriptions identify coins; his unillustrated catalog arranges coins by emperor, denomination, and inscription. Two examples of Cohen's Caracalla 965 demonstrate the differences which may exist between specimens which share an identical inscription. These two coins can be dated to the same year by the reverse inscription, TR·P·X, referring to Caracalla's Xth year as a tribune of the plebs, yet the two die engravers give significantly different heads of the emperor.

In addition to his failure to distinguish different iconographic representations, Cohen is deficient in distinguishing mint-marks. In the specific case of Aurelian, whom we know to have reformed the coinage, although our source for this (*the Historia Augustorum*) is disappointingly vague, Cohen ignores the mint-marks of the antoniniani he lists except for a general list of mint-marks he has observed. An important factor here is obviously the connection between specific mints and the treatment of the portrait by various die-engravers.

Although Cohen's catalog may have been a step forward when it was published (Second Edition, 1880-1892), it has become obsolete since the publications of the British Museum, etc. and should be retired to the rare book room.

## **BOOK NEWS & REVIEWS**

**CANDAROGULLARI BEYLİĞİ** (*Catalog of the Isfendiyarid Coins*), by *Celil Ender*. 265 pages, 32 plates of 350 coin photos with clear drawings of all within the catalog text. 6-3/4 x 9-1/4 inches, stiff card cover. ISBN 975-93806-1-7. (*Ender Numismatik Yayınları No. 3*). English text. US\$ 50.00. Published by author: C. Ender, Posta Abone Kutusu 76, 81062 Erenköy, İstanbul, Turkey.

After many years of research and visits to museums in Turkey and Europe, the Turkish Islamic Numismatist and Historian has produced an important Catalog of the coins of the Anatolian Beylik prior to its annexation by the Ottomans in 795H, and afterwards until the final annexation in 866H.

Classified under each ruler: Sulayman 709-741H; 'Adil Bey 746-759H; Bayazid (Kötörüm) 759-789H; Sulayman II (Shah) 781-792H; Isfandiyar Bey 795-843H (and after the annexation in his second reign (in Kastomonu, Sinop and Samsun); Ibrahim Bey 843-847H; Isma'il Bey 847-865H.

Many of the specimens selected were from Turkish private collections, 49 from Cüneyt Ölçer's published works, 60 from the Tübingen University collection, and also the museums in Samsun and Sinop.

Talat Mumatz Yaman, the Turkish historian was the first to correct historians by using the name derived from the founder Candar Bey rather than Isfendiyar Bey in his important book published in 1935. His fine coin collection and library were destroyed in a fire. Recently he has died but Ender was able to compile notes from correspondence about his rare coins.

The photos are by Turhan Birgili and are well printed, which together with the excellent line drawings makes the catalog a pleasure to use. It fills a gap in the literature.

Reviewed by Kenneth MacKenzie  
NI No. 364

*The 2003 (9<sup>th</sup>) edition of the Standard Catalog of World Paper Money, Modern Issues 1961 – Date, Volume Three edited by Neil Shafer and George S. Cuhaj was published by Krause Publications in May 2003 at US\$ 45.00 retail. Available by mail from the publisher, Krause Publications, Book Dept. PR03, P.O. Box 5009, Iola, Wisconsin 54945-5009. Shipping to US destinations add \$US 4.00, for each additional book of any title, ordered at the same time are available for \$US 2.25 shipping. Outside the US add \$US 20.95 shipping for the book and \$US 5.95 for each additional book. Credit card customers can order toll free, by calling (800) 258-0929. Canadian residents will pay a lower shipping charge by ordering from The Unitrade Press, 99 Floral Parkway, Toronto, Ontario M6L 2C4 phone (416) 242-5900 and fax (416) 242-6115.*

The 973 page (8-1/2 x 11 inch) soft covered catalogue contains over 12,000 listings of banknotes issued by more than 380 note issuing authorities for 223 countries from 1961 to date. More than 7,500 black and white photos illustrate the catalogue.

This updated edition has added more illustrations, detailed text and signature information, as well as expanded specimen listings.

A short historical, political, geographic and descriptive text, as well as a regional index map, situating the country, are presented at the top of the page for each country whose banknotes are catalogued in this volume.

Listings are organized according to country and subsequently by bank of issue. Notes are catalogued by date.

Photographs of both sides of nearly all type notes are shown. Included for each type note description are: a catalogue number, denomination, issue date or dates, major colors, description of the main design elements on the note, watermark, printer's name where known, the name of the issuing bank and valuations in up to three grades of preservation. Signature, date, security device changes, color changes, changes in administrative positions of the signor of the note, specimen notes and other varieties are catalogued. Signature charts of actual, but enlarged signatures are given where there is sufficient data. Collectors' series are catalogued at the end of the section for the issuing country.

There is an introductory section of 43 pages with a number of useful tables and sections including: a Country Index, an Issuer & Bank Index, a Grading Chart, a Standard International Numeral System, a Foreign Exchange Table, Definitions of Various Security Devices, an Illustrated three page Country/Bank Identification Guide, an eight page color photo section of the obverse sides of one bank note from each of 70 countries, a Hegira Date Conversion Chart, a chart of months for 32 countries, a listing of Banknote Printers and a three page Glossary.

Other related catalogues from the publisher: The 9<sup>th</sup> edition of "Standard Catalog of World Paper Money, General Issues, Volume Two", which covers government banknotes issued from 1368 – 1960 was published in October 2000, US\$65.00 retail. The 9<sup>th</sup> edition of "Standard Catalog of World Paper Money, Volume One, Specialized Issues", which covers banknotes issued by early provincial and state governments, commercial banks, regional authorities and military administrations was published in October 2002, US\$ 65.00 retail.

Reviewed by Jerry Remick  
NI No. 213

***The 2004 Standard Catalog of World Coins, 1901 – Present (31<sup>st</sup> edition) by Chester L. Krause and Clifford Mishler, and edited by Colin Bruce II was published in July 2003 by Krause Publications, Iola Wisconsin. Resembling a thick telephone book, it has 2280 pp, is 8-1/4 x 10-7/8 inch, bound with soft cover. Retails***

*at US\$ 54.99. Available by mail from the publisher Krause Publications, Book Dept. PR03, P.O. Box 5009, Iola, Wisconsin 54945-5009. Shipping to US destinations add \$US 4.00, for each additional book of any title, ordered at the same time are available for \$US 2.25 shipping. Outside the US add \$US 20.95 shipping for the book and \$US 5.95 for each additional book. Credit card customers can order toll free, by calling (800) 258-0929 or [www.krausebooks.com](http://www.krausebooks.com). Credit cards accepted. Canadian residents will pay a lower shipping charge by ordering from Unitrade Associates, 99 Floral Parkway, Toronto, Ontario M6L 2C4 phone (416) 242-5900 and fax (416) 242-6115, email: [Unitrade@unitradeassoc.com](mailto:Unitrade@unitradeassoc.com).*

The 31<sup>st</sup> edition of this catalog provides complete coverage of 20<sup>th</sup> century world coinage, featuring updated current prices for virtually every coin produced from 1901 to the present. Included are current prices and data on circulating coins, pieforts, commemoratives, bullion issues, mint and proof sets, patterns, trial strikes, essai coinage, non-circulating legal tender issues, and historically significant tokens. Enlarged photos and valuations are given for major die varieties.

The coins of more than 450 countries are covered, the countries being listed in alphabetical order. The listings are illustrated by more than 48,750 actual coin photographs, generally showing both sides of each type coin.

The catalog contains a listing by date and mint mark with mintage figures for world coins. Each coin is valued in up to seven grades of preservation. There are more than one million coin prices. The following data is given for each type coin: a KM#, denomination, metallic composition, privy marks and list of dates.

For each country there is an index map locating the country and a few paragraphs on its geography, population, resources, exports and history.

The catalogue's Introductory Section contains a number of charts, tables and texts to assist world coin collectors, among which are: a table of standard international numeral systems, a country index, a guide to international numerics, a foreign exchange table, an eight page section on how to use the catalogue including grading, a table of international grading terminology and abbreviations, a four page illustrated instant coin identifier, a coin denomination index, a mint index, a Hegira date conversion chart, a silver bullion chart, a gold and platinum bullion chart, a chart of coin sizes by millimeters, a two page illustrated section on monograms on coins, and an eight page illustrated guide to Eastern mint marks.

Individual catalog volumes covering 17<sup>th</sup> century (1601-1700), 18<sup>th</sup> century (1701-1800) and 19<sup>th</sup> century (1801-1900) world coins are also available from Krause Publications, in the same format as their 20<sup>th</sup> century catalog. Details on these books are given in the illustrated catalog of books and periodicals published by Krause Publications, which is available from them free of charge.

Reviewed by Jerry Remick  
NI No. 213

# MEMBER NOTICE PAGE

**Fred Knust, Box 2, Mason, MI 48854 USA, e-mail: KNUSTPA@YAHOO.COM**

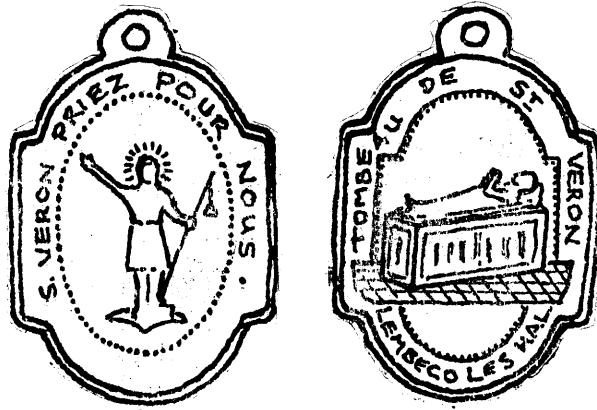
For Sale Item: **The John A. Snell Collection of Chinese Coins of the Twentieth Century.** Dr. Snell served as a Methodist Missionary in Soochow, China. His "Chinese Copper Coins of the Twentieth Century" appeared in *The Numismatist* of June 1932. He is cited by Woodward in the Kiangsu article of *The Minted Ten-Cash Coins of China*. The collection consists of 474 different coppers of the late Empire and early Republic. For a 14 page list of these by Mandel and Woodward numbers with Krause-Mishler values, send an addressed envelope with \$1 for postage to Fred Knust.

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## ST. VERONUS OF LEMBEEK

**Bob Forrest, Manchester, England, NI #2382**

The aluminium medal shown here 1½ times actual size, and which is probably of early 20<sup>th</sup> century date, is in many ways self-explanatory. Its obverse shows the saint, his right hand raised to heaven, his left hand holding what look to be a pilgrim's staff, and with the legend S. VERON PRIEZ POUR NOUS (St. Veronus, pray for us.) The reverse shows us the tomb of the saint (TOMBEAU DE ST. VERON) at Lembeek-bij-Halle (LEMBECO LES HAL), a few miles south of Brussels. Unfortunately, St. Veronus seems to have been overlooked by all the major encyclopedias of saints in English, and since the only reference to him that I have been able to find is a Belgian web-site (<http://www.heiligen.net/jan/3101a.htm>), it may be useful to set down a summary translation of it here.



Veronus was born in the early 9<sup>th</sup> century, the son of King Ludwig of Germany, and a great-grandson of Charlemagne. He left home at age fifteen to seek a simple life of devotion to God, and settled at Lembeek, where he took a job as a lowly farm-hand. Even in this occupation he served as an example to everyone, and never shied away from any work, no matter how menial. Legend has it that on one occasion (presumably when water was in short supply) he stuck a stick into the ground and a spring miraculously appeared there. The said spring is close to the present-day church of Lembeek.

St. Veronus used to tell his sister, Verona, that he wished to be buried at a spot which would be indicated to her by a fallen tree, a wish which came to be fulfilled at his death on January 31<sup>st</sup> 863. Miracle cures were subsequently reported from his grave-side, as a result of which the saint came to be a special protector against disorders of the head (hoofdziekten), typhoid, rheumatism, fevers and boils. As the medal indicates, his tomb was subsequently housed in the church of Lembeek.